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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT MEDIA EXCHANGES,
JAPANESE HISTORY TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY

1. Summary: Major Chinese-languages Taipei dailies started to comment April 12 on a Mainland Affairs Council's (MAC) announcement Sunday that Taiwan would temporarily ban China's Xinhua News Agency and the People's Daily from sending journalists to Taiwan. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" editorial supported MAC's decision by saying these so-called cross-strait "media exchanges" are basically a "fairy tale that deceives all people" in light of the lack of press freedom in China. The centrist "China Times," on the other hand, ran an editorial that suggested Taiwan's "open society" is its greatest asset and the one thing that makes Taiwan better than China. Taiwan would become a "total loser" if it were to give up this asset, the editorial said. Kao Ling-yun, a "United Evening News" reporter who was a participant in the Spring 2004 Jefferson Fellowship program at the East-West Center, said in an op-ed piece in the pro-unification "United Daily News" that media exchanges are an international trend and Taiwan should not brag about being democratic while at the same time trying to aggressively control media outlets.

2. The anti-Japanese protests in China and South Korea against Japan's history textbooks that justify Japan's aggression during World War II still did not receive significant coverage in the major Chinese-language newspapers in Taiwan April 12. Stories on the protests were buried deep in the last few pages of these newspapers, and only two limited-circulation English-language newspapers commented on the issue. The pro-independence English-language "Taipei Times" editorial cautioned the Taiwan government to be sensitive to tensions between Japan and China while avoiding becoming directly involved in any Sino-Japanese dispute. The pro-unification English-language "China Post" focused its commentary on China's attempt to "block" Japan's rise in international stature. End summary.

1. Cross-Strait Media Exchanges

A) "With News Coverage That Distorts Truth, What Is the Need to Talk about [Cross-Strait] Media Exchanges?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (4/12):

"Taiwan and China are two totally different countries. Taiwan enjoys democracy and freedom, but China is a totalitarian country. In terms of press freedom, Taiwan's media not only enjoys freedom of the press but has also enjoyed too much freedom of the press. As for China, all its media outlets are politically controlled, let alone press freedom. The Chinese Communist Party's 'party-controlled propaganda' is now practically a sacred doctrine that cannot be violated. Under such a situation whereas both sides of the Taiwan Strait enjoy uneven freedom of press, the so-called cross-strait 'media exchanges' are nothing but a fairy tale that deceives all people.

"Take the cases of Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily as an example, the government's opening policy [to allow these two Chinese media outlets to send journalists to Taiwan] was originally designated to promote Chinese people's understanding of Taiwan. But as China's official mouthpieces, how could the Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily maintain an objective viewpoint and the principle of genuine reporting when they covered, reported and commented on Taiwan's news? To put it more plainly, the performance of the Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily is tantamount to reaching deep into Taiwan and conducting political work for the Beijing authorities; they are basically serving the politics of 'twisting Taiwan's reality from Taiwan.' Their behavior not only will not 'contribute to the understanding across the Taiwan Strait' but have

deepened the Chinese people's misunderstanding of Taiwan's public opinion and the value of democracy and freedom. As a result, the move to allow Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily to send journalists to Taiwan has done nothing favorable for either Taiwan or the Chinese people. ."

B) "An 'Open Society' Is Taiwan's Greatest Asset. Please Cherish It!"

An editorial of the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] wrote (4/12):

". This is the function of media. One does not see an immediate effect [of media reporting], but it gradually opens the vision of media . and the self-consciousness of the reporters. [Through media reporting], the most valued characteristics of Taiwan's society can thus be revealed - namely, Taiwan's democracy, rule of law, freedom of speech and thinking - none of which are something that mainland China can compare to. Even if mainland China's economic growth continues to surge or its military power continues to grow, it cannot turn into an open society in a short period of time. What Taiwan should attach the greatest importance to is in fact this invisible asset that is deep-rooted in the people of Taiwan. .

"Now, even if Taiwan's economic power is not as strong as that of mainland China's; its military strength is weaker than that of mainland China's and its influence on the international society is much inferior than that of mainland China's, its free and open society, democracy and rule of law is actually the most important key that makes itself a winner over China. Taiwan will be a total loser if it wants to give up this last advantage. ."

C) "[Taiwan] Brags about Itself Being Democratic But Still Gruffly Constrains the Media"

United Evening News Journalist Kao Lin-yun wrote an op-ed article in the conservative, pro-unification, Chinese-language "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] (04/12):

"The Mainland Affairs Council made the decision to ban journalists from People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency from covering news in Taiwan. The decision is not conducive for the accumulation of goodwill with regard to cross-Straits interaction. Instead, it reflects in particular the hostility toward the media in the consciousness of the [Taiwan] government. The government made the attempt to punish the Chinese media outlets . simply because it is displeased with the Chinese authorities. The attempt, which lacks democratic spirit, is the same as the Government Information Office's decision a few years ago to use censorship to oppress Taiwan's media that criticized the government. .

"Taiwan has always been proud of itself as being more democratic than China politically. Can a democracy find it hard to handle even two media outlets? Moreover, since the government dared to allow Chinese media outlets to send journalists to Taiwan, it should be capable of enduring their [negative] reports. Or does the government want to demand those Chinese media outlets to become its own mouthpiece? ."

12. Japanese History Textbook Controversy

A) "Avoid Fanning Sino-Japanese Unrest"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/12):

". Such an upsurge of anti-Japanese nationalism will necessarily rouse Japanese nationalism. China's and South Korea's joint protests against Japan have made Tokyo feel isolated and threatened. This is likely to make it more determined to secure its security relationship with the US. Japan's rearmament, therefore, seems, inevitable.

"With the expansion of the Sino-Japanese conflict, Taiwan's security and regional stability could suffer. Taiwan and Japan are both threatened by China. Washington and Tokyo have noted their concerns over Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait in their joint declaration on security. However, recent incidents, such as the Anti-Secession Law and Taiwan's Solidarity Union Chairman Shu Chin-chiang's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, have polarized Taiwanese public opinion with regard to China and Japan. The government should be sensitive to tension between Japan and China and

prepare a response strategy, but for the moment it should avoid getting directly involved in any Sino-Japanese dispute."

B) "PRC Blocking Japan's Rise"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] observed in an editorial (4/12):

"Beijing is trying to block the rise of Japan by keeping it out of the United Nations Security Council. Grave implications are in store for Taiwan. .

"If china prevented Japan's elevation, it would mark their most serious confrontation since Japan's invasion of China in 1937.

"The U.S. and Japan are well-prepared for the worst scenario with China, but Taiwan, unfortunately, is on the wrong side of it."

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